



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re the Application of: NAKAJIMA, Akio

Serial No.: 09/400,833

Filed: September 21, 1999

FOR: WORKPIECE-TRANSFER DEVICE

Examiner: FLORES SANCHEZ, OMAR

P.T.O. Confirmation No.: 3858

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

July 12, 2002

Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated **June 7, 2002**, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and removal of the rejection of Claims 1-3 and 19 as anticipated by Kawada et al. (U.S. 5,358,375) under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

The invention of Applicant, as specified in primary Claim 1 is to a workpiece-transfer device for loading a material workpiece in a workpiece-machining device and unloading a machined product workpiece from the workpiece-machining device. The workpiece-transfer device includes a device with a rectangular coordinate system for moving a traveling body in a first horizontal direction (x) along the direction in which the workpiece-machining device and a workpiece-storage device (2) stand, at one side of the workpiece-machining device in a line, as well as in a second horizontal direction orthogonal to the first horizontal direction. The traveling body includes a gripper for gripping a material or product workpiece, and the workpiece-storage device (2) includes a product-housing section (21) arranged for stacking of machined product workpieces and a material-housing section (22) arranged for stacking of material workpieces provided in parallel, on the one

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side, in the second direction (Y). This arrangement of a workpiece-transfer device is not taught or suggested in the Kawada et al. reference.

In the Office Action, it is stated that Kawada et al. shows a movement means 127, a workpiece-machining device 1, a workpiece-storage device 5R-L, a gripping means 129, a product-housing section 5L, a material-housing section 5R and a skeleton-housing section.

The Office Action, however, completely overlooks the distinct arrangement of the various portions of the present claimed device when compared with Kawada et al.

In Kawada et al., the product-housing section 5L and material-housing section are in line, one on either side of the workpiece-machining device 1. This arrangement is no different than the arrangement of the previously cited references Clark and Lockert, which the Examiner indicated, at the interview held March 14, 2002, did not render the present claims unpatentable.

The present claimed device has a workpiece-storage device which has a product-housing section and a material-housing section in parallel, on one side of the workpiece-machining device, in a second direction orthogonal to a first direction in which the workpiece-machining device and the workpiece-storage device are positioned. Such an arrangement is not taught or suggested in Kawada et al. The present arrangement provides for a square-shaped layout of the entire facility, while the Kawada et al. arrangement, as well as the previously cited references, provides for an extended in-line positioning of the various sections.

Applicant does not believe that the Kawada et al. reference is any more pertinent than the previous references cited.

The mere allegation that the Kawada et al. reference shows various features of the present claimed device does not render Applicant's claims anticipated or obvious when the layout or arrangement of the various features of the present claims is completely distinct and provides benefits that are not found in the reference.

In conclusion, the present cited reference, Kawada et al. is no more pertinent than the previously cited Clark and Lockert references which have been overcome.

In view of the above discussion, Applicant's Claims 1-3 and 19 are believed to be patentable and early action towards allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully Submitted,

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WGK/nrp

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